



Department of Justice

THOMAS J. MILLER
ATTORNEY GENERAL

ADDRESS REPLY TO:
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Fall, 2001

Dear Friends,

Nothing is more important to Iowans than keeping our children safe. We are fortunate to have a good record of school safety in Iowa, but because the consequences can be so devastating, we must not be complacent. We must be prepared. To keep children safe in Iowa schools, we need a three part strategy that includes planning, prevention and partnerships.

It is important that schools work with the law enforcement, medical professionals and emergency planning people in their communities to develop a plan for responding in the event of a violent incident. Good planning can save lives in an emergency.

No one, however, wants to wait for a tragic incident to happen. The truly critical work in this area is in prevention. We need to use available research to develop our children's assets, reduce risk factors and teach them alternatives to violence. We must foster strong connections between our children and their schools and communities.

Schools cannot do this alone. We need to develop and strengthen partnerships between our schools and others in the community who are working to benefit youth. We need partnerships to create response plans that will work in the event of a tragic incident. We need partnerships to help our at risk students, schools collaborating with human services providers and juvenile court services to create coordinated service plans for students and their families. And we need partnerships between schools and other community agencies to foster youth development for all our children and do the important prevention work that needs to be done.

The Safe Schools Leadership Handbook is a tool to help in this process. It contains information about research and resources that schools can use. It is my hope that, together, we will continue to keep Iowa schools safe for our children and youth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Miller".

THOMAS J. MILLER
Attorney General